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Stuart Itoga - Re: Summary of the Russell City Energy Center Wetland Mitigation Proposal

From: <DDavy@fwenc.com>
To: "Keith Lichten" <KHL@rb2.swrcb.ca.gov>, <jileahy@calpine.com>, <jlmd@calpine.com>, <andrea@argonautconsulting.com>
Date: 3/15/02 2:58 PM
Subject: Re: Summary of the Russell City Energy Center Wetland Mitigation Proposal
CC: "Dale Bowyer" <DCB.RB2Post.RB2Domain@rb2.swrcb.ca.gov>, <jdidonat@ebparks.org>, <hayward@ebparks.org>, <sitoga@energy.state.ca.us>, <ryork@energy.state.ca.us>, <rsmith@spd.usace.army.mil>, <etattersall@dfg.ca.gov>, <wlle@haywardrec.org>, <bhartman@fwenc.com>, <dcarrier@fwenc.com>, <don_hankins@fws.gov>, <alexa@ci.hayward.ca.us>, <monroe.michael@epa.gov>

Keith,

Here are Brett Hartman's responses to your questions. Please let us know if you have additional questions.

1. The Waste Management Parcel is about 26 acres, and the adjacent City of Hayward parcel is 30 acres. Thus, the total area to be enhanced with tidal action is about 56 acres. The Waste Management parcel is approximately 26 acres, but the City of Hayward parcel is more than 30 acres. However, not all of the land area in these parcels is managed salt marsh. Additional habitats include uplands, diked seasonal marsh, and seasonal ponds. Using GIS, the approximate area of salt marsh enhancement was calculated at 36 acres, or 30 acres on the City of Hayward parcel, and 6 acres on the Waste Management parcel.

2. Levee reconstruction. The primary reason for reducing the levee height to four or five feet elevation is to create a more favorable habitat for pickleweed, due to increased soil moisture. This will increase the value of the levee as upland refugia and spring forage. The side slope angle of the Johnson Road levee will be 2:1, an acceptable grade for structural integrity. Side slope manipulation will be kept to a minimum on the western side, which borders the pickleweed marsh. The wetland creation will occur by removing the levee and regrading on the eastern side, which borders diked seasonal wetland and a seasonal pond. The eastern side of the Johnson Road levee is dominated by wild oats and black mustard, and pickleweed habitat is not expected to be impacted.

3. Removal of "miscellaneous pockets of fill" and the 0.08 acres of creation. In the diked seasonal wetlands, there is up to an acre of fill dispersed in small areas. In addition, there are approximately three acres of adjacent uplands on the historic marsh-upland transition zone. The diked seasonal wetland is not subject to the same risk of flooding as the tidal marsh, and upland refugia for the salt marsh harvest mouse is less critical in this habitat. Only 0.2 acres of fill will be removed where it can be accessed by the long reach excavator from the levee. There will be sufficient upland habitat remaining for salt marsh harvest mouse spring forage.

The 0.08 acres of creation will occur in the upland habitat of Area 1. This area is dominated by ruderal species and is not moist enough to sustain either creeping wildrye (Leymus triticoides) or saltgrass (Distichlis spicata), both native forage grasses for the salt marsh harvest mouse that are present on the RCEC site. If a small area of soil (0.08 acre) is excavated to 10" above mottle depth, it will meet the jurisdictional criteria for wetlands, provide sufficient soil moisture for these grass species (i.e. 'wet feet' but not inundation), while still maintaining the habitat characteristics of adjacent upland.

4. Removal of 'illegal' fill. Comment noted. We will refer to this as incidental fill.

5. Hydrologic study. The hydrologic study will be the foundation of the dredging and grading plans. A preliminary hydrologic assessment has already been done, and a detailed study will be completed once the aerial photographs with 1' contour lines has been obtained (expected by end of March).

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03/14/02 02:13 PM

To: <DDavy@fwenc.com>
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Subject: Re: Summary of the Russell City Energy Center Wetland Mitigation Proposal

Doug,

Thank you for forwarding the summary to me. I had a few questions, which I will quickly email to you, as I have to be in a meeting shortly.

1. The Waste Mgmt. mitigation site is about 26 acres, and the adjacent City of Hayward land is about 30 acres. Thus, the total area to be enhanced with tidal action is about 56 acres. Is this correct?

2. Levee reconstruction. Reconstruction of the existing levee would steepen the existing fairly shallow slopes and could impact areas of existing pickleweed on the levee side. Is this correct? Would these

steeper slopes impact the ability of wildlife, including the salt marsh harvest mouse, to use them as a refuge? What are the expected impacts to pickleweed (i.e., can you spell that out as part of the overall proposal, ultimately, and do you have a general sense now of what we would be talking about).

3. Removal of "miscellaneous pockets of fill." I'm not sure what this means. Is the proposal to remove some of the islands at the mitigation site that may be providing refugia for SMHMs and other wildlife? It is not clear to me that this is something we could support as contributing to the enhancement of the overall project. Similarly, can you give me a little better detail on the 0.08 acre of creation? Where are you looking at doing this?

4. Removal of 'illegal' fill. A minor issue, but this is perhaps not the best way to word it, since as a regulatory agency, 'illegal' implies to us that we should be doing enforcement to get it removed, rather than considering it as part of a mitigation plan for additional fill. Perhaps recent incidental fill (or if it was 10 years ago, etc.)...perhaps there is a better way to word this.

5. Hydrology study. I did not see this explicitly listed as part of the mitigation plan, but I am assuming it would be completed, since it is a crucial element of successfully completing the tidal restoration. Is that assumption correct?

Overall, thanks for the submittal and I will take it up with management as soon as we get the clarifications.

Thanks,

-Keith H. Lichten
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